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Mr. *Ridgley's*  
SERMON  
ON THE  
DEATH  
OF  
Mrs. *Elizabeth Bankes.*

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MR. R. B. B. B.

SEVEN



NO

DEATH

OF

Mrs. Elizabeth Barker



A  
Funeral Sermon  
Preached on the  
DEATH  
OF

Mrs. *Elizabeth Bankes* :

Who Departed this LIFE, the  
11th. of September, 1711.

By *Thomas Ridgley*.

L O N D O N,

Printed for, and Sold by J. Clark,  
at the Bible and Crown, in the Old-  
Change, near St. Paul's. 1711.

A  
Funeral Sermon

Preached on the

DEATH

OF

Mrs. Elizabeth Raper:



Who Departed  
11th. of Sep.

At the Church of St. Andrew, Holborn.

By Thomas Ridgely.

Printed and Sold by J. C. ...

LONDON.

Printed and sold by J. C. ...  
at the ...  
George ...

TO HIS  
Much Respected Friend,

Mr. John Bankes.

SIR,

**T**HE Multitude of Books already printed, as well as the ill-natur'd Censures of a Cavilling Age, might make One, not guilty of the same Crime, think, That he, who crowds a Book into the World, must either have something Extraordinary to present his Readers with; or, retains a Mind not much affected with what is said of him, or his Performance. The Former, I am far from pretending to; The Latter, tho' necessary in the Conduct of human Life, is an Attainment I would rather press after, than boast of. If I am, therefore, ask'd, Why the following Pages, containing the Substance of what You Lately heard from the Pulpit, with some necessary Alterations and Enlargements, should venture beyond the Bounds of some neglected Corner of my Study: You, Sir, must bear Your Part in Answering for me; while I subjoyn, that Your Friendship has  
laid

## The EPISTLE Dedicatory.

*Laid greater Obligations on me, than so inconsiderable a Matter, as Printing a Sermon, can reach.*

*THE Subject, how much soever it may be eclips'd by the Manner of its Handling, has in it an Uncommon Excellency and Usefulness: For what more desirable than Rest! And what Rest like that, which is to be found in GOD!*

*THE Occasion, indeed, is Melancholy: May I often impress the Thoughts of Mortality on my self and others; but, were it the Will of GOD, have very few such Motives to excite 'em. Providence, that herein speaks to all; in common with Your Self, first requires Your Attention, who not only hear; but feel its Stroak. GOD has, within a few Weeks past, not made a single Breach upon You, but even emptied Your Family; first by removing an Only Daughter, whose Life had been Exemplary, and adorn'd with serious Godliness: And, therefore, Death was to her no Unwelcome Messenger; tho' it was to You.*

*AND then, that Your Wound might bleed afresh, You must part with a True Yoke-fellow, who had been Partner with You, not only in the Comforts, but in the Burthens of Life, from Your Youth. From whose Calm and Easy Temper, You had Peace and Happiness at Home, after the Fatigues of Business Abroad. And suffer me to say, that to Her prudent Management of Affairs in Your Family, You owe no small Part  
of*

## The EPISTLE Dedicatory.

*of what Providence has bless'd You with. Her Conversation afforded You and Others, an Example of Great Sincerity, and Close Walking with GOD. Her Love to Publick Ordinances was very great. Her Discourse was frequently tinctur'd with Divine Subjects, and much to Edification. Her Bowels of Compassion, and large Contributions to those in Distress, made Her desir'd in Life, and Her Death much lamented.*

*BUT alas! when we call to mind the Excelling Qualities of our deceased Friends, thinking thereby to sooth our Passions, they insensibly gain Ground upon us, when we consider, that to us, they are no more. Nevertheless, we are not to sorrow, as those that are without Hope, for them that sleep in JESUS; They are safely landed in their Desired Haven, while we are tossed, as with a Tempest, in an Unquiet World. Our Great Business is, to be Followers of them, who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the Promises. 'Twould not be worth while, to tell the World, what our Friends departed, once were; their Memory should rather be conceal'd with them in the Grave, if it were not design'd to be Instructive and Comforting to us; as 'tis said of Abel, that he being dead, yet speaketh; Heb. 10. 4.*

*THIS Consideration may entitle me to the Favourable Thoughts of those, who, to express their just Indignation against Flattery, will admit*

## The EPISTLE Dedicatory.

admit of nothing to be spoke in Commendation of the Dead.

WHAT I have said concerning Your Deceased Wife, is offer'd as a Tribute of Praise to that GOD, by whose Grace, we are, what we are. To that Grace I recommend You. May You have a Large Share of those Blessings that accompany Salvation; that what You have lost in the Creature, may be made up in Him, who is All in All.

I am,

SIR,

Your Affectionate,

Humble Servant,

London, Nov. 26.

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1711.

Tho. Ridgley.

A 

Funeral Sermon  
ON THE  
DEATH  
OF

*Mrs. Elizabeth Bankes.*

PSALM cxvi. 7.

*Return unto thy Rest, O My Soul,  
for the Lord hath dealt bountifully  
with thee.*

**I**F we take a View of the many Distresses, which Man is expos'd to in this World, we may well say, that we sojourn in *Mesech*, and dwell in a *Weary Land*. Now, the great Enquiry, which we, therefore, ought to make, is; Where shall we find *Rest*? What is the  
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Way of *Peace*? And where may our Souls meet with that Comfort and Satisfaction, which cannot be found in the Creature? To this, we have an Answer, in the Words we have now read; in which, the Psalmist speaks to his own Soul, that had been under great Troubles, as he says in the third Verse, *The Sorrows of Death compassed me about, and the Pains of Hell gat Hold upon me; I found Trouble and Sorrow*: But now, *Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul*. “Thou who art  
 “so uneasy, whilst every Thing admini-  
 “sters Trouble to thee, Go to thy *Resting*  
 “Place, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully  
 “with thee; Thou may’st, from the Ex-  
 “perience which thou hast had, of the  
 “Divine Goodness, comfortably con-  
 “clude, that as He has been thy *Hope*, so  
 “he will be thy *Rest* in the *Day of Evil*.

THESE Words are very useful for the Meditation of those, who have met with great Distresses in the World, and there is nothing more comfortable to any one, when he’s in Expectation of Launching forth into Eternity, than to be able to say, *Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul*; therefore, they can’t be unsutable to the present Occasion, in which we are to speak something to those, who have lost a near Relation. And the Method, in which, I shall consider them, shall be to shew,

I. *WHAT*

I. *WHAT* is suppos'd in this Command of the Psalmist to his Soul, to return to its Rest.

II. *WHAT* is that Rest, to which it is to return.

III. *THE* Ground and Reason, why he expects this Rest; The Lord hath dealt bountifully with me.

And then conclude with something by way of Application.

I. *WHAT* is suppos'd in the Words, when he says, *Return unto thy Rest*; It implies, that he had before met with very little Rest; that all Things had made against him; that his Soul was disquieted within him. This, indeed, may be the Case of Believers themselves, as it was David's, yea, 'tis in some measure, the Condition of all Mankind; *We are weary'd in the Greatness of our Way*, whilst seeking after Happiness and Rest; but shall not find it in this World, without a Mixture of Uneasiness. We are, under this Head, to consider the State of Man in this Life, as void of Rest, and undisturbed Peace, which we shall do in Two Particulars.

First, *THE* Providences of GOD in the World, afford Matter of great Uneasiness to all Men, more or less.

Secondly, *SOME* are very uneasy under

*an Overwhelming Sense of the Wrath of GOD,  
and the Hidings of His Face.*

First, *THE Providences of GOD cause Matter of Uneasiness to all Men.* We meet with many Changes, by which, the Almighty shews His Sovereignty over us; and that we owe all we have to His meer good Pleasure: Sometimes He sends a sudden Blast on all our Hopes and Comforts, so far as they are deriv'd from the nether Springs. The Sun that shines forth in its Brightness in the Morning, may be cover'd with Clouds before the Evening: That Happiness, which we fancy our selves possess'd of, may soon leave us in Distress and Misery. And, indeed, this is not only possible, but unavoidable to Man; who is, as *Job* says, *Chap. 5. 7. Born to Trouble, as the Sparks fly upward*: 'Tis not merely the Result of some violent Efforts of Providence; or like the Arrow, that flies upward, so long as the Force that gave it Motion continues: But Troubles are born with us; we carry our Chains about us, the Marks of our fall'n State, thro' ev'ry Stage of Life, 'till we come to our Journey's End, and rest together in the Dust. Death lies in wait for us, and which Way soever we turn, 'tis ready to meet us. To speak of the Afflictions, which are inseparable from us in this present State, would be to give a large History of  
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the Life of Man, and would represent him to us in his best State, as *altogether Vanity*.

BUT in speaking concerning the Providences of GOD, as affording Matter of Uneasiness, we shall consider them, either *more largely*, as they respect the *World*, and the *Church* in it: Or, in a more limited Sense, as they concern *Particular Persons*, or *Families*.

1. THE Providences of GOD in the *World*, or *Church*, are oftentimes very disquieting. The Providences of GOD in the *World* are so: There are therein many Confusions and Desolations, great *Distress of Nations*; GOD's Hand seems to be lifted up, He proclaims War against all the World. Jer. 25. 29, to 32. says He, *I will call for a Sword upon all the Inhabitants of the Earth. The LORD shall give a Shout*; as Conquerors do, when their Enemies fall before them. *He has a Controversy against them, He will plead with all Flesh, He will send forth Evil from Nation to Nation.* What Ruin is here prepar'd, not for a City, or Nation, but for the whole World! This World is the Stage of Rebellion against GOD; Men therein are guilty of the vilest Ingratitude and bold Presumption, as tho' it were a difficult thing for Him, to crush them into nothing; or sink them as low as Hell. Now if the Judgments of GOD are sent abroad,

abroad, throughout the Earth; if the *whole Creation groans*, under the Weight of *Misery*, that is laid upon it, we cannot but conclude this to be a State, in which there is no True Rest.

AND then the Church of GOD in the World, has a large Share of Trouble; the United Force and Rage of Hell and Earth is directed against it. 'Tis a burthensom Stone, a *Rock of Offence* to its Enemies; *Persecuted on every side*: Sometimes, *Israel sits by the Rivers of Babylon, and weeps at the Remembrance of Zion. Their Strength being deliver'd into Captivity, and their Glory into the Enemies hand.* Psalm 78. 61. With how bitter, and mournful Complaints, do's the Church vent its Grief in the *Lamentations!* Chap. 1. 4, 12. *The Ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn Feasts; her Gates are desolate, her Priests sigh, her Virgins are afflicted; and she is in Bitterness. Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see, if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow.* Chap. 2. 1, 13. *How hath the LORD cover'd the Daughter of Zion, with a Cloud in his Anger! &c. ----- Her Breach is great, like the Sea, who can heal it?* Chap. 3. 18. --- *My Strength and my Hope is perished from the LORD.* The whole Book, indeed, is but one continued doleful Sigh of the Church, under the Sense of GOD's Afflicting Hand. When  
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the Psalmist saw the Judgments of GOD, tho' at a Distance, making towards His People; with what Terror and Amazement was he struck! *Psalm 119. 120. My Flesh trembleth for Fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy Judgments.* This is something more than what is common; when GOD arises out of His Place, and gives forth the Word; as in *Joel 2. 1. Blow ye the Trumpet in Zion; and sound an Alarm in my Holy Mountain: let all the Inhabitants of the Land tremble; &c.* Sometimes He seems resolved, to remove his Candlestick out of its Place, because the Means of Grace are not duely improv'd; or, if He continues His Ordinances, to take away His special Presence: And, O! how many Judgments will follow upon this! If Professors are indifferent in Matters of Religion; if they are carnal, and walk like the Men of this World; may not GOD give them up to a Spirit of Slumber? Our own Iniquities bring those Evils upon us, which all the Force and Violence of our Enemies cannot do: They separate between us and our GOD. Judgment, sometimes, begins at the House of GOD: and if the Foundations be destroy'd, what can the righteous do? as the Psalmist speaks, *Psalm 11. 3.* If GOD seems to be angry with them; how afflictive and distressing will this be! If He send a Famine of the Word, or banish them from

from His House; all Things will be out of Order in their Souls, which must needs occasion great Uneasiness.

2. THE Dealings of GOD with *Particular Persons, or Families*, oftentimes occasion great Uneasiness. When the Judgments of GOD come nearest to us they are most affecting; when *His Voice*, like the Sound of the Trumpet on Mount *Sinai*, *waxes louder and louder*; and the mighty Thunder of His Indignation hangs over our Heads, and threatens us with immediate Ruin; what Dread and Confusion do's this bring with it! When He marks out Particular Persons for Slaughter, as the Monument of His Fury, and they are forced to cry out: "Against me is His Hand turned; He hath set me as a Mark, against whom all His Arrows are directed." O! the Variety, and almost insupportable Weight of Personal Afflictions! They are, sometimes, like the Messengers, that brought *Job* the sad Tydings of his ruin'd Circumstances in the World; who came so fast, that before One had finish'd his melancholy Relation; another surprizes him, with an Account of what was yet more afflictive. *David* compares his Troubles to the Waves of the Sea; *Psalms* 42. 7. *Deep calleth unto Deep, &c. all thy Waves, and thy Billows are gone over me.* When GOD follows us with Disappointments,

ments, strips us of our best Enjoyments, snatches away our dearest Friends, that have been *the Delight of our Eyes*; in short, when he writes bitter Things against us, and causes us to possess the Guilt of our Iniquities; this will make us very restless: We shall be ready to say; What will the End of these Things be? We may fear, that GOD will pursue with His armed Hand, 'till He has forc'd us into Everlasting Perdition: This, sometimes, makes them question, whether *the Root of the Adulter be found in them*: Some are apt, either thro' the Prevalency of Temptation, or the Weakness of their Faith, or the Low-ness of their Spirits, being pressed down with Doubts and Fears, to conclude, that GOD hates them, because His Hand is lifted up against them; that they have fondly deceiv'd, and impos'd upon themselves, while they thought they were in CHRIST; and so they conclude themselves to be the most deluded, and beguiled Wretches in the World; and that for the future, their *Eyes shall never see good*. They deny what they have experienc'd, and *their Souls refuse to be comforted*: They torment themselves with supposed, as well as, real Evils; so that they are, sometimes, brought almost to the very Brink of Despair, distrusting and lessening the Kindness of GOD; and, at the same time, mag-

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nifing the smallest Afflictions; as tho' they had in them the very Quintessence, and Bitterness of Death itself; or, ev'ry Twig of the Rod of GOD, was the Sting of a Scorpion. They determine, also, against themselves, that it shall never be otherwise; that the Night of Darkness, in which they are, shall never see a Morning; and, that the Clouds shall never be dispers'd. These are the Workings of the uneasy Spirit of Man, under Afflictive Providences. We are not, indeed, to suppose this Frame, and Disposition of Mind warrantable, tho' it be in GOD's People themselves, there is much Unbelief in it; but, hereby it appears, that when we are under the Afflicting Hand of GOD, we may be, and oftentimes are, very restless in our own Souls.

Secondly, *MAN* is very uneasy, when under a Sense of the Wrath of GOD. When He distributeth Terrors unto us by measure. In the former Instance, GOD tries us by His Providential Dealings; in this He breaks us, as with a Tempest. The Soul looks, as it were, into the bottomless Pit, expecting ev'ry Moment to be cast into it. Sin, indeed, is the Occasion of both; but a Sense of the Wrath of GOD pierces deeper, wounds more sensibly, than all the common Afflictions of Life can do. In those Afflictive Dealings with us, He de-

designs to humble us; but, in this He shews us, what it is, to have to do with an Absolute GOD; or, at least, apprehended to be so by us; that it is a fearful Thing, to fall into the Hands of the Living GOD. This is not only the Condition of GOD's Enemies, but sometimes of His own Children. Thus Heman reckons himself, *Psalms 88. 5. Free among the dead, like the slain, that lye in the Grave; whom GOD remembreth no more.* Ver. 15, & 16. says he, -----*While I suffer thy Terrors, I am distracted. Thy fierce Wrath goeth over me, &c.* He is *Magor-missabib, a Terror to himself, and to all about him.* Hear what David says, *Psalms 38. 2, 3. Thine Arrows stick fast in me, and thy Hand presseth me sore. There is no Soundness in my Flesh, because of thine Anger; neither is there any Rest in my Bones, because of my Sin.* And *Asaph* speaks in the Language of those, who have no Hope, tho' he confesses it to be his *Infirmity*, or, an Instance of the Weakness of his Faith, when he says, *Psalms 77. 7, &c. Will the LORD cast off for ever? and will He be favourable no more? Is His Mercy clean gone for ever? doth His Promise fail for evermore? Hath GOD forgotten to be gracious? hath He, in Anger, shut up His tender Mercies?* And holy *Job* had such a dreadful View of the Wrath of GOD, that he seem'd to speak very unadvisedly concerning Him.

*Chap. 16. 9. He teareth me in his Wrath, who hateth me : He gnasheth upon me with his Teeth ; mine Enemy sharpeneth his Eyes upon me. i. e. pierceth me with his Eye, which is like a Flame of Fire.* I suppose, with some of the best Expositors, that these Words are to be refer'd to GOD, (and so the Sense is connected with the foregoing Verses) and not to his Enemies among Men, whom he speaks of, in the Plural Number, in the following Verses. And, indeed, *Elihu* tells him, *Chap. 33. 8, & 10.* that he spake in his Hearing ; that GOD counted him for his Enemy. We might consider, also, the Case of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, under a like Sense of the Wrath of GOD, who represents himself as in the *Belly of Hell* ; concludes himself to be cast out of GOD's Sight, and sets forth his Soul-Troubles, as well as his outward Circumstances, by that Expression, *The Waters compass'd me about to the Soul.* See *Chap. 2. 2, 4, 5.*

BUT, that we may see the Difference between the Wrath of GOD falling on *His People*, and on *His Enemies* ; we must distinguish between His *Paternal*, and His *Judicial Wrath*. One is the Stroke of Vindictive Justice, aiming at Satisfaction for Sin, exacting on the Sinner a Debt of Punishment, which he can never pay. The other is, with a Design, to humble, and

and bring the Soul to a true Repentance, for Sin, and make him, for the future, watchful against it. When GOD corrects in Anger, the Sinner is brought to nothing; but His People are enabl'd to see hereby, that *It is a bitter, and only Evil, that they have forsaken the LORD.* Jer. 10. 24. Chap. 2. 19. Some call the former, *Chastisements*; the latter, strictly and properly speaking, *Punishments*: But in Scripture, they are both indifferently, termed *Punishments*. Therefore, some call the one a Punishment for Sin, but with a Design of Grace; the other the Punishment of Sin, in which GOD makes His Power and Fury known.

AGAIN, When a Soul is under Wrath; Sin is either charg'd upon the Person, which is inconsistent with a justify'd State, or on the Conscience, which may be the Case of a Believer. He is not, indeed, *rejected of GOD, appointed to Wrath, cast out of His Sight*; but he apprehends himself to be so, and deals with himself accordingly: This makes him, sometimes, to be *troubl'd at the Presence of GOD*, and when he considers what a GOD He is, he is *afraid of Him*. Thus Job speaks, Chap. 23. 15. Therefore, as to the Effects of the Wrath of GOD, there seems to be little, or no Difference, between a Believer, and an Unbeliever, when the same measure of His Wrath falls on the Consciences of either  
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of 'em; tho' the Event will put a Difference: For the one sinks, and is lost in the Storm; the other is carry'd safely thorow it.

BUT, that we may see how Restless the Soul is in this Case; Conscience pronounces against it, the condemning Sentence of a violated Law, and fills it with the Dread of an Offended GOD; which makes him fly as one persud'd by an Almighty Enemy. *The Fear of Death, and Hell, makes him all his Life-time subject to Bondage*; this makes his *Heart soft*, as *Job* speaks; this is that *wounded Spirit, which is so hard to be born*; *Job 23. 16. Prov. 18. 14.* When Distress arises, from External Providences, he may have some Redress within his own Breast: Sometimes he can *forget his Miseries*; they do not always make the same Impression upon him; and *the Spirit of a Man may sustain his Infirmities*; he may encourage himself with this; that, if the former Part of his Journey has been unpleasant, what remains thereof may be better: Or, at least, he has a sufficient Ground of Hope, that when he comes to the End of it, he shall go to a better Country; where all Troubles shall have an End. Tho', at present, all Things look black, and comfortless about him; yet there may be some secret Spring of Comfort in his own Soul; and above all, he has this to support

support him, that GOD will never fail, nor forsake those that put their Trust in him: But in the Case we are now considering, a Man is arm'd against himself, and the Torment he has in his own Mind, is far greater than all the common Afflictions of Life. Alas! what shall he do? If he look up to Heaven, there are Glories which once he thought, he had a good Title to; but now concludes, he has no Part nor Lot in them. This present, transitory World, cannot, with all its Insinuations, and specious Pretences give him Rest, while his Thoughts are taken up with ev'ry Thing, that may increase his Troubles. Thus he supposes himself, standing at the Brink of the Bottomless Pit, *wherein is no Water of Refreshment*. How doleful is it, to think, how many Monuments there are, of Divine Fury, shut up in Chains of Darkness, without Hope of Mercy, and, to be fill'd with the Dread hereof, in our own Souls! The Man, who a little before, suppos'd himself happy, now thinks his very Hopes, which he then entertain'd, little better than presumptuous Sins: He supposes his former Peace, to have been an empty Shadow, a vain Delusion; but his present Miseries are substantial, and such as he can by no Means, fly from; because they have their Rise from the Presence of the LORD: And whether shall he go from His Presence?

'Tis

'Tis the Wrath of a GOD, whom he apprehends to be Inflexible by all Entreaties, and oblig'd by the Holiness of His Nature, as well as the Truth of His Threatnings, to punish Sin; Unchangeable in His Purpose, and, therefore, will not reverse the Decree, nor long forbear, to execute the Sentence, pass'd upon him. O! what Prejudices, does such an One conceive against GOD; as tho' His Wrath had swallowed up, and put an End to His Attribute of Mercy; or, at least, that Mercy would not stoop so low, as to take hold of him; therefore, he must sink, and perish! Is not this an Instance of a restless Soul, under the Wrath of GOD? I have, hereby, describ'd the Condition of One, whose Distress is uncommon; but many feel it in some Degree. And, indeed, it could be no small Sense of Wrath, that made *David* cry out, that *the Pains of Hell gat hold upon him*; Ver. 3. of the *Psalms*, in which is my Text. I am here speaking of the most discouraging Part of the Life of a Believer; or, that, in which, he don't appear to be what he is: And this wou'd be the Case of all, shou'd GOD give us up to our own Fears; and, at the same Time, let fall some Drops of His Wrath into our Consciences.

HOWEVER, He is not without Redress, whose Condition is as disconsolate

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as we have represented ; for, there is not more Terror, in all I have said, than there is Encouragement, and useful Direction, in what I am going to consider, in speaking to the *Second General Head*.

II *WHAT* is this Rest, which the poor uneasy Soul is to have Recourse to. 'Tis not any kind of Rest, which is here intended : There is a careless, and insensible Frame of Spirit, which is a very great Judgment, rather to be fear'd, than indulg'd : By this, the Conscience is stupify'd, but not chang'd for the better. Such are like the Sick Man, who, tho' sensible of no Pain, lyes under the Burthen of some mortal Distemper, which disorders the whole Frame of Nature. We read of some, whose Consciences are seared with an hot Iron ; and so do not bring in those heavy Charges against the Soul, which they ought to do. The Rest we have hereupon, is forced, not genuine ; 'tis Man's Creature, not GOD's ; tho' GOD may be said, to have giv'n him up to a Spirit of Slumber. And, as it is not of a right kind ; so it will not be really serviceable to him. What did it avail the poor, resolute, deluded Man, to say ? *I shall, or I will have Peace, tho' I walk in the Imagination of mine Heart*, Dent. 29. 19. when in the next Verse, GOD threatens him, that for this, *His Anger, and His Jealousy*  
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*should smother against him, and all the Curses that are written in His Book should lye upon him.* Moreover, As his Rest will do him no good, so it will not long abide: How can it, when he has so great a Weight of the Wrath and Curse of GOD upon him? 'Tis true, he comes by it at a very easy Rate, by fancying, that Sin, in general, or his own Iniquities, in particular, are not attended with those Aggravations; and consequently, his Misery is not so great, as once he thought it was. Thus he wears off a Sense of Sin; and the Terrors of GOD make no Impression on his hard Heart: And that this foul Mistake may be varnish'd over, and there may seem, at least, some small Foundation, to support his Peace; he will perform some Moral Duties, or abstain from some grosser Abominations. But by this Peace, or rather Indolence, or Stupidity, Sin gets Advantage against him, 'till it breaks forth, like an impetuous Torrent; and, at length, will make him more restless, and farther from true Comfort, than ever.

BUT the *Rest*, which we are to consider, is of a better, and higher Nature; 'tis one of the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace, a very comprehensive Privilege; for 'tis interwoven with other Blessings, and adds to them a refreshing Sweetness, which makes it, the Object of Desire, and  
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Delight ; and we shall speak to it, either, as it is to be found in *Christ* ; or, as it is expected ; or, shall be enjoy'd hereafter, with *Christ*.

I. *A Soul may take up his Rest in Christ* ; Thus we read of *Dwelling in GOD*, or, in the secret Place of the *MOST HIGH*, and under the Shadow of the *ALMIGHTY* ; and *CHRIST* is compar'd to an *Hiding Place from the Wind* ; a *Covert from the Tempest*, and the Shadow of a *Great Rock* ; in *Isa. 32. 2.* This was plainly typify'd by the Cities of Refuge, under the Ceremonial Law : The poor Man-slayer was afraid, every Moment, of being overtaken, and destroy'd, by the Avenger of Blood, who was in Pursuit of him ; he was never out of Danger, 'till he got into one of those Cities ; and there he found Rest, and Safety.

NOW, we shall consider *this Rest*, which is to be had in *CHRIST*, with regard to the Two Grounds of Trouble aforementioned.

First, *THE Rest we may find in Him*, in the midst of all adverse Providences, we meet with, from Him. Or,

Secondly, *WHEN we are under a Sense of the Wrath of GOD.*

First, *WHAT is that Rest*, which we may find in *CHRIST*, in the midst of adverse Providences : These, as I have shew'd, are either such as respect the Church of *GOD*

in the World; or, our own *Persons and Families*.

First, *WE may find Rest in CHRIST, in a day, when the Providence of GOD, brings many Desolations on His Church, and People in the World.* It is, indeed, our Duty to sympathize with it, and mourn for its *Afflictions*; yet, even then, we are not without some Encouragement concerning it. Suppose, it is *black*, by reason of its afflicted Circumstances; yet 'tis *comely*, by virtue of its Relation to CHRIST, and His *Comeliness put upon her*; and whatsoever be the Dispensations of Providence, yet GOD will keep it, as the Apple of His Eye; *the Gates of Hell may assault, but shall not prevail against it.* 'Tis said *to flourish, like the Palm-Tree*; 'twill bring forth the most Fruit under the greatest Oppression. Are you discourag'd, because your Lot is cast in a dark, and gloomy Day, *a Day of Rebuke and Blasphemy*? Do's your Heart tremble, *because of the Ark of GOD*? Be not discourag'd, leave this Matter in CHRIST's Hand, He'll take Care of it: Indeed, He never gave it Ground to expect undisturbed Rest in this World; for then, it could scarce be said, to be in a Militant State. This was One of the last Legacies He left with it, *In the World, ye shall have Tribulation; but in me ye shall have Peace.* John 16. 33. It shall

shall be safe and happy, notwithstanding present Calamities ; for its Safety is in CHRIST. Consider the great Price, He paid for it ; Will He lose, what cost Him His Blood ? We may conceive of it, as His *Trust* and *Charge*, committed to Him, by the Father, to keep ; and will He be unfaithful to Him, who appointed Him hereunto ? Consider His *Propriety* in it : Will He not take Care of His own ? And His *Love* to it, which is so great, that the whole *World of the Ungodly*, whose *Names are not written in the Book of Life*, are no more in His Account, if compar'd with His Church, than the Dross is, to the Fine Gold ; or, the Chaff, to the Wheat : *I gave Egypt*, says he, *for thy Ransom*, i. e. to be destroy'd, that thou might'st be spar'd : *Æthiopia and Seba for thee* : “ The Gentile  
 “ World shall be, for many Ages, rejected,  
 “ and the Means of Grace, and Salvation,  
 “ in, and thro' a Mediator, shall not be  
 “ made known to it ; that Thou may'st  
 “ enjoy all the special Blessings, which I  
 “ have to bestow. And what is the Reason  
 of this ? 'Tis because thou wast *precious in my Sight*, and *I loved thee*. Isa. 43. 3, 4. Art thou uneasy in thy Mind, because the *Daughter of Zion sits as a Widow*, and is solitary, and desolate ? Or, dost thou think, that every Storm, that arises, shall swallow it up ? Faint - hearted Soul !

CHRIST

CHRIST has not the same Thoughts concerning it, as thou hast. It is not forsaken, because persecuted; nor destroy'd, because cast down; nor in a desperate Condition, because you see no Way, by which, Salvation may come unto it: No; our Lord JESUS knows, what Good is design'd for it; and shall be brought out of its present Evils; and says to it, as He did to Peter; *What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.* Had we the Faith, and Holy Resolution of David, we should say; *If GOD be our Refuge, and Strength, a very present Help in Trouble; We will not fear, tho' the Earth be removed, and carry'd into the midst of the Sea; tho' the Waters thereof roar, and are troubled; &c. Psalm 46. 1, 2, 3.* Tho' it be, like Israel, many Years in a howling Wilderness; it shall come, at last, to the Blessed Land of Rest; where it shall have no more Difficulties to conflict with; but enjoy Everlasting Consolation.

BUT then, suppose, the Hand of GOD toucheth us, in our Persons, or Families; let us commit our selves, and them, to the Blessed JESUS. When Jacob fled from his Father's House, to avoid the Fury of his Brother; and when he was alone in Bethel, having none to support, and encourage him, but his GOD; What sweet Repose, had he, when CHRIST appear'd

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to him in a Dream, and establish'd His Covenant with him? *Gen. 28.* When *David* had been persecuted, and chased from Place to Place, by *Saul*, his implacable Enemy; 'till he was forc'd, to take Shelter in the Land of the *Philistines*; and he had not been long there, before, the City assign'd him to live in, was burn't down; and his Wives, with those of his Friends, and their Sons, and Daughters, were carry'd captive by the *Amalekites*, the worst, and most inveterate Enemies, *Israel* had met with; with whom no Peace was to be made; and, therefore, little Kindness was to be expected from them, to be shewn to their Prisoners: *The People lifted up their Voice, and wept 'till they had no more Power to weep: And David was greatly distressed; for the People spake of Stoning him, supposing this Loss, which they thought irreparable, to be owing to his Management: How do's he behave himself in this great Difficulty? 'Tis said, that He encourag'd himself in the Lord his GOD: 1 Sam. 30. 1, to 6.* With what Satisfaction, does the Apostle *Paul*, think of the great Loss, he had sustain'd in *CHRIST's* Cause! And how small a Value, did he set upon it, because his Gain had, or wou'd make it up, with infinite Advantage! *Phil. 3. 8. I have suffer'd the Loss of all Things, and do count them, but Dung, that*

*I may win CHRIST:* And when he was ready to be offer'd, to dye a Violent, and Cruel Death, and his former Friends were ashamed of him, and forsook him; he takes the greatest Pleasure in CHRIST's Company, Who, as he says, *stood with him, and strengthen'd him*; 2 Tim. 4. 17. Thus there is a Rest for us in CHRIST, when under the forest Personal Afflictions, which befall us, in the Course of common Providence, in the World.

Secondly, *A Believer may have Rest in CHRIST, when under a Sense of the Wrath of GOD.* 'Tis true, this cannot be enjoy'd, 'till GOD is graciously pleas'd to manifest himself to him; which, when He do's, 'tis always *in the Face of CHRIST*: He shews him, where he must go for Comfort, and what large Provision there is made for him in the Blessed JESUS.

HE is led into the Knowledge of three things, which are very encouraging.

1st. *THE Way of Justification by the Meritorious Obedience and Death of CHRIST.* Here is somewhat for him to plead, in behalf of his self-condemned Soul. As we obtain Peace of Conscience, by a Divine Impression on us, and a Secret Intimation giv'n us, that there is Hope concerning us: So it is indispensably necessary, that we have something to plead, or alledge, in our behalf; in as much as it is a  
Fruit

Fruit of justifying Faith. Now Faith first makes a Discovery, thro' the Teaching of the Spirit, of CHRIST's Righteousness; then pleads it; and so takes Encouragement or Rest from it. This Transaction is most solemn and awful: The Soul stands, as it were, at CHRIST's Tribunal; where, under Him, Conscience sits as Judge. 'Tis true, there are not those Ensigns of Majesty and Glory, such as shall be, when CHRIST, in His own Person, shall be seated on a Throne of Judgment, at the Great Day: But it is invested with an Authority, to lay the Soul under Conviction, and tell him, that either he is condemn'd, or acquitted, already; and to make him tremble, or rejoice unspeakably, when the Sentence is past. And this Process, tho' in our own Breast, being judicial, there must be a Pleading; and no Plea will avail to give Peace here, but what will be admitted hereafter. Therefore, this Justification, and the Rest we enjoy, pursuant hereunto, includes in it, our Pleading an Interest in a crucify'd Jesus. And, if it be objected against thee, O Soul, that thou hast broken the whole Law of God; then plead, that *CHRIST hath fulfill'd all Righteousness, and has hereby magnify'd the Law, and made it honourable*: Or, if 'tis alledg'd against thee, that thou art a vile, apostate Creature, who hast abas'd thy self, ev'n unto Hell: Thou must stand

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speechless, and charge thy self with the Guilt of all this, and ten thousand times more; but yet there is a Plea for thee: *The Blood of CHRIST* is the Blood of Atonement; and as such, as well as by its sanctifying Influence, it *cleanseth from all Sin*.

“ O blessed JESUS! Was it not for what  
 “ Thou hast done for me, I should not be  
 “ able to lift up my Head; but in Thee  
 “ I look for Acceptance with GOD; In  
 “ Thee I have Boldness in the Day of  
 “ Judgment, and Rest, as being justify’d  
 “ freely by thy Grace.

2dly. *A Soul under the Terror, and Dread of the Wrath of GOD, sometimes, has Encouragement, by considering, that Part of the Charge, which he brought in against himself, is not well-grounded.* ’Tis true, if we charge our selves with being Sinners, nay, the Chief of Sinners, the Accusation is just; for if we have not been so in Fact, ’tis not owing to our selves; Sin has a kind of Infinity in the Will of Man, unless restrain’d by Grace: But if we say, “ Alas! I am  
 “ lost for ever, a Cast-away, I never had a  
 “ Principle of Grace, never put forth the  
 “ least Act of Faith; ” it may be, by a happy Disappointment, thou may’st find thy self mistaken: ’Tis one thing, to say, I’m a Sinner, or that I have remaining indwelling Corruption within me; another thing to say, I’m an Hypocrite, a painted

Sepulchre; I have nothing but the outward Form and Appearance of a Christian: In the former Part of the Charge, thou dealest truly, and justly with thy self; but in the latter, thou may'st be mistaken. Now when the Spirit of GOD shews thee, that thou art so, hereon will ensue Peace of Conscience, and Rest in thine own Soul.

3dly. *WE are enabl'd to discern, apply, and take Comfort from the Promises.* They are like the River, the Psalmist speaks of, *The Streams whereof make glad the City of GOD.* Now the Promises, that are suitable to a Soul under a Sense of the Wrath of GOD, are such, in particular, as respect Forgiveness of Sin; thus see *Isaiah 43. 25. I, even I am he, that blot out thy Transgressions for mine own sake; and will not remember thy Sins.* What free Grace is couch'd in those Words! and how full and rich is the Grace promised in *Psalms 130. 7. With the LORD there is Mercy, and with Him is Plenteous Redemption.* And *Isaiah 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, &c. and return to the LORD, and he will have Mercy on him, and to our GOD for He will abundantly pardon.* And how comprehensive is that Promise ( every Word whereof is refreshing, and, as it were, gives a new Life to a dejected Soul! ) in *Micah 7. 18, 19. Who is a GOD like unto Thee, that pardoneth Iniquity, and passeth by the Transgression*

of the Remnant of his Heritage? He retaineth not His Anger for ever; because he delighteth in Mercy; he will turn again, he will have Compassion on us, he will subdue our Iniquities, and Thou wilt cast all their Sins into the Depth of the Sea. So if we think, that GOD takes no Notice of us; and that our Iniquities will one Day rise up in Judgment against us. See *Isa. 44. 21, 22.* Thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out as a thick Cloud thy Transgressions, and as a Cloud thy Sins. And *Jer. 50. 20.* The Iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none. That is, None charg'd upon him for his Condemnation, and the Sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them. If the heinous Aggravations of Sin, seem to exclude thee from this Privilege; see *Isa. 1. 18.* Tho' your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow. 'Tis not spoken concerning Sin itself; for that is as black as Hell, in its own Nature: But the Person sinning shall be white, not with respect to his inward Purity; for that is, at best, sully'd with Corruption in this imperfect State; nevertheless, having on the white Robe of CHRIST's spotless Righteousness, in Justification, he is white as Snow. Can any thing be more encouraging? and when these Promises are set home with Power, on our Hearts, and we enabl'd to make a particular Application

cation thereof; that gives Rest to a Soul, who before, was under a Sense of the Wrath of GOD. Thus we have consider'd, what that Rest is, which Believers have in *CHRIST*.

Secondly, *THERE is a Rest, which they shall all have with Him hereafter.* This is what the Apostle intends, in that comfortable Word, *1 Thes. 4. 17. So shall we ever be with the LORD.* None can fully explain this Doctrine, but those, who are admitted into *that General Assembly and Church of the First-born in Heaven*; where 'tis understood, not by rational Demonstration, but by immediate Sensation. Here we know but in Part, and speak of Heavenly Things in so confus'd a manner, that GOD may say to us, as He did to *Job*; *Who is this, that dark'neth Counsel, by Words without Knowledge?* Something, indeed, we have been told of it; tho' the greatest Part is cover'd with a Vail, like the *Holiest of All*, in *Solomon's Temple*, that we may admire, and long for it, while we confess our selves to be, *but of Yesterday, and know nothing*; or, that *We cannot order our Speech by reason of Darkness.* The Word of GOD sets it forth as a State of Rest, not such a Rest, as the Body shall have in the Grave; where 'tis stript of all its Active Powers, as well as freed from all its former Sufferings. Heav-

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ven is not a Rest from Work, but from Troubles ; and there is not only, the sweet Enjoyment of GOD without Interruption : But the best Employment without Weariness ; *They shall rest in their Beds*, i. e. of Glory ; 'tis such a Rest as is adapted to the Nature of the Soul ; for, it immediately follows, *Every one walking in his Uprightness*, Isa. 57. 2. And in Rev. 14. 13. as they *rest from their Labours*, so, *their Works follow them* ; i. e. not only the blessed Fruits and Consequences, of their Good Works, shall follow them ; but the same Graces, that were exercis'd here, in this imperfect State, shall be perfected ; and, so far as they are consistent with the Heav'nly State, shall be translated with the Soul, and maintain'd for ever in Exercise.

WE may, moreover, consider this Rest, as a *State of Enjoyment*, which is contain'd in the very Notion, and Nature thereof ; and therefore, when CHRIST bids them enter into his Rest, he says, *Enter into the Joy of your Lord* ; Matthew 25. 21. So that it is a Cessation from all Evil, and a State, in which, the Soul is imploy'd in the best Work, and enjoys the greatest Measure of Happiness. This will appear in four things.

1<sup>st</sup>, *THERE is the best Society*. How desirable a Thing is it for us, to be admitted into CHRIST's immediate Presence,  
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and joyn'd to the Inhabitants of the New Jerusalem! Thus Heav'n is call'd *CHRIST's* Presence, Psal. 16. 11. and a *Resting with the Saints.* 2 Thes. 1. 7.

1. *THEY* are admitted into *CHRIST's* Presence, which is the utmost Pitch of all Happiness. The Psalmist speaks as though there was nothing but Him, which he could call a sufficient Portion. He overlooks all the other Glories there, when he says Psal. 73. 25. *Whom have I in Heav'n, but thee?* and the Apostle Paul could desire, and think it best of all, to depart hence; with this single View, that then he should be with *CHRIST*, Phil. 1. 23. *CHRIST's* Glory shall be the principal Object, for the Saints to behold; and His Love, the Spring, from whence all their Comforts flow; therefore, because He loves 'em, they shall be where he is: This is, as it were, the Sum of His Desires in their Behalf, John 17. 24. *Father, I will, that they, whom thou hast giv'n me, may be with me, that they may behold my Glory.* From this immediate Presence arises intimate Communion, which, on *CHRIST's* Part, consists in His bestowing all Blessings on His People; and in theirs, in giving all Glory to Him.

2. *THEY* are admitted into the Society of *Angels and Glorify'd Saints.* The Former, we were unacquainted with before; the Latter are so chang'd, that they are a Wonder to themselves, as well as others;  
for

for they have no Marks of Sin and Misery left, by which, they were once too well known to all about 'em. Then their Society will be much more desirable, than 'twas before; for in this lower World, we hear little from them, but Complaints; we sympathize with them in their Distresses, and, sometimes, mourn with, and over them, and are often uneasy, because they are so. And then, that Converse, from which we expect most Advantage, is often render'd useless, either thro' Pride, when Men speak of Divine Things, with such a Mixture of Self-Conceit, as tho' their Design was, to gather too large Gleanings in GOD's Harvest; sometimes, unreasonable Passion breaks forth, especially in discoursing of disputable Matters, when thinking it very grievous, to bear Contradiction; as tho' our own shallow Understanding, was the Standard and Rule of Truth to all the World. And, sometimes, when we converse about things, that have a more immediate tendency to raise the Affections; alas! something, or other intervenes, that casts a Damp upon them; when we proceed, from Things more Spiritual and Experimental, to others more Speculative, Nice, or Curious, than profitable. Thus, when CHRIST had been speaking so affectionately to Peter, Simon, Son of Jonas, *lovest thou me?*

*John*

John 21. and had been giving him a particular Commission to preach the Gospel, *Feed my Sheep*; and had told him, what he must suffer for his sake, *by what Death, he should glorify GOD*: Alas! his Affections soon grew cold; Lord, says he, concerning John, *What shall this Man do?* What shall become of him? What shall he suffer? which was a Matter, foreign to what CHRIST had been speaking to him of before, and which tended rather to satisfy a vain, inquisitive Temper, than bring any real Good to him. So when CHRIST had been discoursing of *the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of GOD*, Acts 1. 3. the Disciples enquire, *Ver. 6. concerning the Time, when it shall be restor'd to Israel*; a question, that might as well have been spar'd. These are the Defects of Conversation here: But, in Heav'n, there can be none of these Inconveniencies; because there's no remaining Corruption, that takes away the Advantage, which might arise from mutual Converse; but the Saints above, are made perfect in Holiness, and, therefore, their Society is very desirable.

2. *THERE is in this Rest, a perfect Deliverance from ev'ry Thing, that might make us uneasy, or unhappy, or, that has, formerly, done so.* In this World, we groan under Pressures of hard Bondage, conflict with Enemies, complain by reason of Afflictions:

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But, when the Measure of Sufferings is fill'd up, after we have pass'd through a Variety of Troubles and Temptations, CHRIST calls us home, and gathers us to Himself; the Summons is giv'n forth, the Messenger sent; and when the Soul stands hovering, between both Worlds, CHRIST says to it, "Come to thy Rest; enjoy  
" what thou could'st not meet with in that  
" World, in which thou hast liv'd; thou  
" hast been, like *Noah's Dove*, weary'd  
" with flying over the Face of the Waters;  
" come into the Ark, where thou shalt  
" be safe; leave it, as *Lot* did *Sodom*,  
" without looking back, as tho' thou wert  
" unwilling to part with thine old Ac-  
" quaintance; or, as *Abraham* left his na-  
" tive Country, and his Father's House,  
" without Hesitation, or Reply to the Call  
" of GOD; thou need'st not regard, nor  
" think much, to leave thy *Stuff* (as was  
" said to *Jacob* in another Case) *i. e.* all  
" the Accommodations of this Life, behind  
" thee; when the Good of a more plentiful  
" Country is thine. Reckon not thy self  
" a Loser, tho' thou must lay down thine  
" earthly Tabernacle; for, at the same  
" time, thou partest with all those Corrup-  
" tions, which Grace had not rooted out;  
" and all those tormenting Fears, by which  
" thy Thoughts have been discompos'd,  
" and almost distracted; and those Bur-  
" thens

“ then, which have made thee walk softly  
 “ all thy Days. Tell thy Persecutors, that  
 “ their Fury, which could not be stop’d  
 “ before, shall pursue thee no farther ;  
 “ There the Wicked cease from troubling,  
 “ and there the Weary are at Rest.

3. *THERE is in this Rest, a full Contentment, and Satisfaction of Soul, in what it enjoys.* Nothing can give us Rest, but what is, in its Kind, suited to the Nature, and in Degree, to the Desires, and Capacities of our Souls: Therefore, carnal Delights are not satisfying, because, not suited to the renewed Nature, and Appetite of a Believer ; and, even Grace itself, according to the measure, in which it is dispens’d here below, tho’ it be suitable to that Divine Nature implanted in the Soul, yet it do’s not give us full Satisfaction, because we are still craving more. How delightful is Water to one that is thirsty ! but a few Drops are not sufficient. Here, GOD gives forth the Blessings of the Upper Springs by Drops, that we may know how far short this Earth is of Heaven: But in that blessed State there is the Fullness of an Ocean ; well then, might the Psalmist say, *When I awake, viz. in the Morning of the Resurrection, I shall be satisfy’d with thy Likeness.* Psal. 17. ult. Wilt thou not think thou hast enough, when thou art possess’d of that Glory, which

GOD has design'd to bestow on those whom He delights to honour ; when thou hast not only his Benefits, but himself ? Thou say'st, the Streams of Love, that flow from him ( which are so great, that thou can'st not set a sufficient Value upon them ) don't give thee a full Satisfaction ; but wilt thou say so of the Fountain ? Tell thy longing Soul, that then, thou shalt have all that, which thou hast been so long praying, and waiting for ; that, which thou hast had the Foretastes of, which have only serv'd to enhance thy Desires, and raise thine Expectations ; let it know, that thou shalt have all the Promises accomplish'd, and made good to it ; and all its Powers and Faculties, how much enlarg'd, soever, they may be, shall have a proportionable Degree of Glory ; and then ask it, if all this will not afford it Rest.

4. *THE Unchangableness and Eternity of that State, determines it to be a State of Rest.* All Things here below, are in a continual Flux and Motion ; the whole Frame of Nature *waxes old, like a Garment*, and makes advances, every Day, towards its Dissolution ; yea, the Apostle Paul, Rom. 8. 22. by a figurative Way of speaking, represents it, as *groaning and travailing in Pain*, and, as it were, uneasy by reason of the Curse of GOD upon it ; by which, he

he elegantly sets forth the Vanity, Mutability, and continual Decay of all sublunary things: But when the Sons of GOD are admitted into that Glorious State of Liberty, design'd for them; then every thing shall attain its Rest. As for the Moral World, we see in it, little else but Changes; *Man in Honour, abideth not.* Our Changes, like our Lives, are measur'd by the successive Spaces of Time, in which, ev'ry Moment presents something new; the Understanding, Will and Affections, are daily persuing, and entertaining themselves with new Objects; and then the Happiness and Miseries of this Life return upon us, like Day and Night. As for Grace itself, tho' its Root and Principle is not subject to decay, yet its Acts, and the Comforts it produceth, are daily chang'd; if our Souls have been, as it were, rais'd above themselves, by uncommon Instances of Love to GOD; or, Zeal for His Glory; or, Delight in His Presence; which afford much of Heav'n upon Earth; alas! how soon is all this lost? the Reason is, because *this is not our Rest.* That, then, which makes Heav'n so, is, because all things abide in the same State: Grace suffers no Abatement, nor shall there be any Cloud there, to obscure the Joy of that Place; 'twould not be Heav'n, *i. e.* the Seat of perfect Blessedness, was it not Eternal; yea,

yea, the Prospect, or Fear of losing what is there enjoy'd, would be inconsistent with, and take away the Sweetness thereof. We may, therefore, conclude it to be a glorious Rest; in as much as it is, as the Apostle says, *1 Pet. 1. 4. An Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* But to proceed to the *Third General Head.*

III. *CONSIDER the Grounds and Reasons, why a Soul may say, Return to thy Rest; viz. Because the LORD hath dealt bountifully with it.* Where GOD has giv'n an Interest in Himself, and made us Partakers of special Grace; we may lay this Command on our selves, *O my Soul, be at Rest; or, Return to thy Rest.* We observe hence two Things.

First, *A Believer ought to retain a thankful Remembrance of past Mercies.*

Secondly, *THIS should excite and encourage us, to return to our Rest.*

First, *A Believer ought to retain a thankful Remembrance of past Mercies.* Thus 'tis said in the Text, *The Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee; or (as One renders it) He has giv'n thee all Things:* See what large Experiences he had of the Divine Goodness, in what goes immediately before, and after the Text; *Ver. 6. I was brought low, and He helped me. And Ver. 8. Thou hast deliver'd*

*deliver'd my Soul from Death, mine Eyes from Tears, and my Feet from falling. So the Church confesses, Psalm 126. 3. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. How delightful a Thing is it, to think of the merciful Dealings of GOD, with us! This is a Theme, that will afford us large Scope for Meditation, when we see our selves deserving nothing; but receiving from his Hand, all Things, that may contribute to make us happy.*

LET us begin at the lowest Step of Mercy, the Blessings of the left Hand, are many and great. *In thy Book, says David, Psa. 139. 16. viz. of Providence, all my Members were written. How great is His Bounty and Care, as the GOD of Nature! May not all our Bones say, Who is like unto thee? Psalm 35. 10. When we look back, as far as our Infancy, and consider, what a long Chain of Mercies we have receiv'd, shall we not have Reason to say, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us? Send thy Thoughts, O Soul, abroad in the World, and conceive of it, as an Hospital of sick, miserable, and dying Men. How many hast thou seen drop out of it, into Eternity; of whom, some have been carry'd from the Womb to the Grave; others have spun out a long Thread of Life; but their Miseries have far exceeded the Number of their Days? Can'st thou not, from hence,*  
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conclude, how much more bountifully GOD hath dealt with thee, than with many others? How much better has He been to thee than thy Fears? And how often has He been to thee, *a very present Help in Trouble?* The Remembrance of these Mercies, should fill us with Admiration and Praise.

BUT thou may'st still ascend in thy Thoughts, there are the Blessings of the Throne, as well as those of the Footstool, the *good Things of the Everlasting Hills*; with which GOD gives Himself: And, indeed, the smallest Outward Blessing, if giv'n as a Pledge and Token of special Love, is hereby render'd exceeding great. It is a very advantagious and delightful Thing, to take a View of the Footsteps of Divine Grace, in GOD's Dealings with us. Preventing Grace has kept us, from *running, with others, to the same Excess of Riot*; there is that in our Nature, which would have precipitated us into Ruin: With what inconsiderate Haste and Violence, should we have gone on, towards Everlasting Destruction? Such may well be compar'd to the *swift Dromedary, traversing her Ways*; where should we have stopt, unless GOD had *withdrawn us from our Purpose*, and preserv'd us, from falling on and perishing by the Sword, that was in our own Hand? and to what a Length should

we have run, had He not kept us back from presumptuous Sins, setting Doors and Bars to that Corruption in us, which nothing, but Infinite Power could restrain? Is not this worth calling to Mind?

YET, thou may'st raise thy Thoughts still higher, and see what Methods GOD has taken, to bring thee into a State of Grace. It may be, thou wast, before this, in all Appearance, as far from the Kingdom of Heav'n, as any out of Hell: Thy whole Soul was out of Order; not meerly overcome by, but dead in Trespasses and Sins; thy Heart as hard as a Rock; thy Mind and Conscience dark'ned and defiled; thine Affections earthly and carnal; GOD was not in all thy Thoughts; thou wast not only a Stranger to, but a Despiser of the Riches of His Goodness. This is the Character of all Mankind, whilst unconverted: If then, a saving Change is pass'd upon thee, oughtest thou not to say with that Disciple? *John 14. 22. Lord, how is it, that thou wilt manifest thy self to us, and not unto the World!*

BUT notwithstanding all this, consider how GOD forc'd His Way into thy Heart, by the Power of irresistible Grace; and so took up His Abode there: This was the Day of His Power, in which He made thee a willing and obedient Subject to His Government; and here began His New

Creation-Work in thy Soul ; where the first thing He form'd was Light, by which thou wast help'd to see thy Sin and Misery (with which, perhaps, thou wast never much affected before) and the Way of Salvation by JESUS CHRIST, in Whom thou could'st never see such a Beauty, and Glory as now. O amazing Change ! whereby, that which was once thought not worth seeking after, is most valuable to thee ; and that, which once was unpleasant, and burthensom to thee, is embrac'd with the highest Delight.

TAKE Notice, also, how GOD put a peculiar Honour on His Word and Ordinances, in making use of them to bring about this Work, that hereby He might give a Testimony to their Divine Original, and imprint a lasting Esteem, and Value for them, on thy Soul. *The Law enter'd*, with its Threats and Terrors, and so *the Offence abounded* ; and had'st thou been left there, thou had'st been shut up in Chains of Darkness and Dispair. But, that the Work might not be interrupted, or miscarry at first, *Grace*, as display'd in the Gospel, and presented to our View by the Holy Spirit, *did much more abound* : These were the Beginnings of His Ways of Grace ; and they should be *marvellous in our Eyes*.

BUT, thou wilt be lost in Admiration, when

when thou callest to mind, how this Blessed Work has been carry'd on in thee. What violent Assaults did it meet with at first ! As CHRIST Himself was persecuted, as soon as He was born ; and tempted immediately after He enter'd on His publick Ministry ; and the Apostles met with the greatest Opposition, in the Beginning of their Work, soon after they had receiv'd *the Spirit from on High* : So Grace, sometimes, undergoes the sorest Conflicts at first, before a Believer attaineth to a settled Peace of Conscience. How unwilling was *the strong Man arm'd*, to quit his Hold ! But how often, has GOD succour'd thee, when tempted ; rais'd thee, when bowed down ; and comforted thee, when most discourag'd ! Hast thou not been in Danger, either thro' Presumption or Dispair ; sometimes casting off Fear, and so growing stupid ; or else, overwhelm'd with it, and giving up all for lost ? Has not GOD, at such a time, found out some Way for thy Escape, from both these Extreame ; some happy Expedient to awaken, but yet, at the same time, to regulate, and ( if I may so speak ) to sanctify thy Fears, and make them of use, to promote in thee, a greater Watchfulness, and more circumspect Walking ?

CONSIDER further, How changeable, the Frame and Disposition of thy Heart

has been ; staggering, as it were, and *halting between two Opinions*, like one undetermin'd, whether to go forward, or backward ; but how seasonably, has the Spirit of GOD come in, to thine Assistance, with His directing and confirming Grace !

YEA, sometimes, by thy Falls and Mis-carriages, thou hast greatly dishonour'd GOD, griev'd His Spirit, harden'd his Enemies in Sin, caus'd His Holy Ways to be reproach'd ; and thou did'st think, that for this thou should'st be abandon'd by Him ; but what large Experience hast thou had, of restoring and forgiving Grace ! In a Word, has not GOD carry'd thee, thro' all the Difficulties thou hast met with, since the time, that thou did'st first look Heav'nward, without which, thou would'st have been at a Loss, and could'st not have gone forward ? We are, herein, like *Israel*, who, after they were deliver'd from *Egyptian* Bondage, yet were to pass thro' the Wilderness, in which, *there was no Way*, no beaten Path ; *no City to dwell in* ; no Fruits of the Earth for their Sustenance ; and, sometimes, no Water for their Refreshment ; all the World were their Enemies, they must fight their Way thorow 'em to the good Land. What shall they do in this Case ? *Moses* pleads for 'em, *If thy Presence go not with me, carry us not hence* ; and GOD promises him, *My Presence shall go with*

with thee, and I will give thee Rest. *Exod. 33. 14, 15.* Thus, GOD is with His People, in their Way, and spiritual Progress; He carries on the *Work of Faith with Power*; which, as often as we call to Remembrance, we have Reason to say, *The LORD hath dealt bountifully with us.*

Secondly, *THE Remembrance of past Mercies, should encourage us to return to our Rest.* You see, one is laid down in the Words, as a Consequence of the other. For our understanding hereof, this must be premis'd; that Rest is to be taken, either *Objectively*, or *Subjectively*; if taken in the former Sense, it is a peculiar Glory of GOD, to be the Rest, or Portion of his People: If in the latter, it is an inward Composure of Mind, arising from a Sense of our Interest in, or Enjoyment of, this Blessed Portion and Happiness; and so it is the same with *Peace*, and is always attended with *Delight* and *Joy*.

AGREEABLY to this twofold Distinction of Rest, there are two Things contain'd in *Returning to our Rest.*

(1.) *A Duty incumbent on backsliding Believers: Return to thy Rest; (i. e.) to thy GOD.*

(2.) *A Privilege: And so it is, as tho' He should say, Be at Rest; let not thy Mind entertain those Thoughts, that tend to make it unquiet and uneasy.*

WITH

WITH Regard, then, to this Explication, giv'n of the Words; we shall consider, how Rest is consequent, on GOD's having dealt bountifully with us, in two Things.

1st. *The gracious Dealings of God with us, engage us to return to Him; who is our Rest and Happiness.* GOD's Bounty obliges us to this, in Gratitude: What Motive is so powerful as Goodness? And what Goodness, like that, which we have been speaking of? If there be no Virtue, or Force in His Love, to constrain us, 'tis a Sign, that we have too low and mean Thoughts of that, which is worthy of all Acceptation, Regard and Wonder; as well as that we have not, that ingenuous and thankful Disposition of Soul, that the loving-kindness of GOD engages to. Do'st thou then find thy Affections withdrawn from GOD; or, taken up with any Thing short of Him, as their Rest? Expostulate the Case with thy self. "O my  
 "unstable, deceitful and treacherous Heart!  
 "hast thou so soon forgot, what pass'd be-  
 "tween GOD and thee? Didst thou not  
 "take Him for thy GOD, and that, with  
 "a most solemn Act of Self-Dedication?  
 "Wast thou not brought to this Resolu-  
 "tion, that nothing short of Him, should  
 "be acquiesc'd in, as a sufficient Portion?  
 "And art thou, now, otherwise minded?  
 "Are broken Cisterns comparable to a Foun-  
 "tain of living Water? Wilt thou take up  
 "with

“ with the Shadow, and Appearance of  
 “ Rest, instead of the true and only One ?  
 “ like *Rehoboam* (who inherited not his Fa-  
 “ ther’s Wisdom, and Greatness of Spirit)  
 “ for 1 *Kings* 14. 26, 27. When the King  
 “ of *Egypt* plunder’d his Treasury, and took  
 “ away the Shields of Gold which *Solomon* had  
 “ made; he was well contented with brazen  
 “ Shields, which he made in their stead.  
 “ Do’st thou satisfy thy self with Creature-  
 “ Enjoyments ? Can they supply the Place  
 “ of GOD ? Or, Can’st thou say, I have e-  
 “ nough in them ? And is not he, who hath  
 “ dealt so bountifully with thee, in Times  
 “ past, to be depended on, for the future,  
 “ for all that thou shalt stand in Need of ?  
 “ Return then, to thy Rest, O my Soul,

2dly. HE whom GOD has dealt bountifully  
 with, may be at Rest in his own Mind. He has  
 a Right to it, as a Privilege ; the Work of  
 Grace in the Heart, is a good Ground of  
 Hope, in as much as ’tis an Evidence of his  
 being in CHRIST : And has not such an  
 One, a Foundation for Peace ? A Believer  
 should not always walk with a dejected  
 Countenance ; I may allude to the Words  
 of *Jonadab* to *Ammon*, *Why art thou, being*  
*the King’s Son, lean from Day to Day ?* Has  
 CHRIST taken thee into his Family ? And  
 art thou always uneasy, complaining, as tho’  
 His Provisions were scanty, His Care abated,  
 or His Bowels of Compassion contracted,  
 or

or quite remov'd? Why should'st thou be like *Hagar*, weeping, as One despairing of Life; when thou standest, beside the Wells of Salvation? Grace and Peace are good Companions; Grace lays a firm Foundation for Peace; and Peace puts a Beauty and Lustre upon Grace: One is the Seed-Time, the Other the Harvest; so *Psalms* 97. 11. *Light is sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the Upright in Heart.* Notwithstanding, we see them sometimes separated, GOD may have dealt bountifully with us, and we remain void of Rest. This is, therefore, a Privilege, which we must look to GOD for; he only, who has a sovereign Dominion over the Heart of Man, can give it Rest; and if He has dealt so bountifully with us, in other Instances, will He not grant us that; which is so necessary, in Order to our Conversing with Him, and Walking before Him, with Peace and Gladness of Heart?

### APPLICATION.

THE Application, which I shall make of the foregoing Subject, shall be in three or four Things; which may be infer'd from the Text.

First, *IT is our indispensable Duty, to converse, and deal faithfully, with our own Souls.* We should ask our selves, What  
Mea-

Measure of Peace, and Rest we enjoy; and upon what Grounds; how we came by it; and what Effect it has on us. They, who neglect this Duty, are, for the most part, bewilder'd; Troubles and Fears overwhelm them, like a Flood, and tho' they may go on safely, as being kept by the Power of GOD, thro' Faith unto Salvation; yet they meet with more than ordinary Difficulties in their Way. If we are Strangers to our selves, we lose the Sweetness and fresh Delights, that arise from former Experiences of the Grace of GOD; the rich Treasure of Divine Bounty lies bury'd in Oblivion, and we deny to GOD that Revenue of Praise which His Goodness calls for. Let us, therefore, strictly and frequently examine our selves, as ever we expect Rest, or Comfort in this World. Say then, "O my Soul! Can'st thou turn thine Eyes from those glittering Vanities, which, many account their chief Good and Happiness? Are thy Desires satisfy'd? thy Wants supply'd? thy Joy fulfill'd, by this one Privilege in having GOD for thy Portion? Dost thou reckon, that without Him, thou should'st have nothing; but in Him thou hast all Things?" Thus we are to enquire after the State, and Frame of our Souls, with regard to this Rest, which they may have in GOD.

Secondly, *How miserable are unconverted*

H

*Sinners,*

*Sinners, who must undergo Soul-perplexing Difficulties, and have no Resting Place to betake themselves to.* The wicked are compar'd in *Isa. 57. 20.* to the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest, there's their Uneasiness; whose Waters cast up Mire and Dirt, there's their Wickedness: Disquietude in Sinners is not only tormenting to themselves; but it has a tendency to stir up their Corruptions, whereby their Souls are, yet, more defiled. Sin first lyes as a heavy Weight on Conscience, and then fills it with Rage and Fury against GOD; which breaks forth in unbecoming Complaints, of the Rigour and Severity of His Dealings. O! the inexpressible Misery of such, who find ev'ry thing arm'd against 'em; they are persu'd on all Sides, and have no Retreat; troubl'd and distress'd, and have no Rest; because Strangers to the GOD of Rest and Peace.

Thirdly, *How much do we dishonour GOD, and abuse His great Bounty, when we give way to slavish Fear, and cannot be perswaded to take up our Rest in Him.* A Spirit of Bondage ill becomes the Heirs of Heav'n, who have Liberty of Access to GOD, as to a Father, plentiful Provision made for 'em here, and much greater Reserves of Glory hereafter.

WE have, already, consider'd the inward Workings of this spirit, as it fills us with  
Unea-

Uneasiness. And the Reasons assign'd for it are, either because we were mistaken and deceiv'd, when we thought we had an Interest in CHRIST, and His special Benefits; or else, we are ready to conceive, there's some Change in the Divine Dealings with us; or, as we may truly say, we find a Change in our Behaviour towards GOD.

1st. *Art thou uneasy, because thou thinkest, the Peace thou once hadst, was not well-grounded.* This calls for a Review, a stricter Enquiry into the Nature of it. Did it take its Rise from some powerful Work, antecedently wrought in thine Heart, which carried in it the Impress of its Author, and even constrain'd thee to say, *This is the Finger of GOD?* Was it such a Work, as went directly contrary to the Biass and Dictates of corrupt Nature? Wer't thou then set against thy self, even to a Detestation and Loathing? Did this put thee upon renouncing *all Confidence in the Flesh*; and fixing it only in *CHRIST*? Didst thou take up thy Rest here, and resolve to seek it no where else? This seems to carry in it something more, than what carnal Reason would prompt thee to. Moreover, was that Peace, which once thou didst enjoy, of a differing Nature, from that careless, indifferent and secure Frame which thou hadst when the Matter was out of Doubt, that thou wert in an unconverted State? One

was a Peace in Sin ; the other in believing : The Former took its Rise from the want of a due Sense of thy Misery ; the Latter, from a secret Testimony of the Spirit of GOD, that thou wert a Child of GOD ; that was attended with the Neglect of Holy Duties, or Formality in them ; but this with a *Respect to all his Commandments*, and an Endeavour after the Spirituality and Life of Religion, in all the Exercises thereof. It may be, thou can'st say, thou verily thought'st, that thou wast in CHRIST ; and that, upon the strictest Search, and, what thou didst then think, the clearest Evidence : Why should'st thou suppose thy self to have been mistaken then, when the bright Side of the Cloud was turn'd to thee ; and not mistaken now, when thou seest nothing but the dark Side ? How unreasonable, therefore, may thy Fears be ; and what Dishonour may'st thou bring to GOD thereby !

2dly. *Doſt thou think, there is ſome Change in the Divine Dealings with thee.* 'Tis true, GOD gives no Account of His Matters : But we muſt have a Care of repreſenting Him mutable, like our ſelves ; *His Gifts and Calling are without Repentance.* If thou could'st ever ſay, thou waſt the Object of His Love ; thou ought'st then to conclude, that He will love thee to the End. The Heart of GOD is always the ſame to His

His People: Sometimes indeed, he may not *cause His Face to shine upon us*; but shall we from thence conclude, that He hates us; or, has not *dealt bountifully with us*. Who would say, the Sun is of no Use to the Earth, because the Wilderness is barren; or in Water there is no Appearance of Fruit? Why should'st thou think, because He has withdrawn Himself, that, therefore, He will never manifest Himself to thee? Dost thou not, herein, *charge GOD foolishly*, and act unbecoming one, who has receiv'd so much from the Fountain of His Mercy?

3dly. *IT may be, there is a Change in thy self, which affords thee Ground of Fear, and makes thee Restless*. Hast thou not back-slidden from, and forgotten thy GOD; and can'st thou expect to walk comfortably, when thou dost not walk holily, and humbly with Him? If we would trace our slavish Fears, and Restlessness of Spirit, from their Original; we shall find, that we first grew remiss in Duty, or follow'd the Course of this World, and became vain in our Imaginations, gave Way to Pride, and carnal Security; and then GOD withdrew His Comforts from us, *hid His Face and we were troubled*. Let us, therefore, remember from whence we are fallen, and repent; and no longer carry our selves towards Him, as Strangers, or Slaves; nor flee

flee from Him, as from an Enemy; since the Reason of all our Uneasiness lyes at our own Door.

Fourthly, *WE ought to make a right Improvement of Grace receiv'd, to quiet our Souls, under afflictive Providences.* Doth GOD follow us, with Losses and Afflictions in the World; whereby, what remains to us, is embitter'd? yet let none say, my Burthen is greater than I can bear; my weary'd Spirits are ready to faint, under the Hand of GOD; for thou hast a Rest provided for thee, charge thy Soul to return to it. This I may apply to those of you who have lost a near Relation; which has occasion'd my present Meditations on this Subject; the Way for you, to quiet your Minds, under the Rebukes of Providence, is to say, "O my Soul! Why should'st thou expect to  
 " enjoy a full and lasting Satisfaction and  
 " Happiness in the Creature? if I have  
 " looked for much from it, it has been  
 " without Ground, and I have herein met  
 " with a Disappointment: But do'st thou  
 " wonder at it? Alas! This is not my  
 " Rest; that is to be found only in GOD,  
 " in whom it behoves me to put my Trust;  
 " and say ev'ry Thing is well done, because  
 " he doth it; I will say of him, Thou art  
 " my Refuge, I'll comfort my self in this,  
 " that whatever He takes from me, He will  
 " not take away Himself; and whatever  
 " Matter

“ Matter of Uneasiness I have here, I shall  
“ have perfect Rest with Him hereafter ;  
“ where I shall meet with no such Losses  
“ and Trials as attend me here”. Let such  
Thoughts as these, refresh your Minds; labour after such Acts of Faith, and an entire Resignation to the disposing Will of GOD. It is no small Ground of Encouragement to you, when you have a good Hope, that your deceased Friends, who walk'd with Christ, in Life, are at Rest, with Him in Death. This, I think, none who knew Her, whose Death we lament, have any Reason to doubt of. Dying Saints are much more happy than us, in their applying this Text to themselves; all that we can say, is, that we can take up our Rest in CHRIST, in an uneasy World: But they can say, “ O my Soul! Go to thy  
“ Resting-Place, tho' it be thro' the dark  
“ Valley of Death, yet thou shalt safely  
“ arrive there, where thou shalt have the  
“ highest Occasion, and the most enlarg'd  
“ Affections, and a whole Eternity, in  
“ which thou may'st proclaim how bountifully the Lord hath dealt with thee”. If this be their happy State, let us rather be Followers of them, as they have been of CHRIST, that so we may have Rest together with them, in His immediate Presence. You may conclude, as sure as you have Grace here, that you shall have  
Glory

Glory hereafter; therefore, improve your present Experiences of the divine Goodness, to excite in you a more lively Hope of Heav'n: This would make the Afflictions of this present Time light, and easy to be born: You would think, what you had receiv'd from the Hand of GOD, and especially what He has provided for you, when you have undergone a few more Tryals, so exceeding great, that you would say, LORD, I am in thy Hand, do with me as seemeth good in thy Sight. Such a Frame as this wou'd rend greatly to quiet your Souls; and then, whatever befalls you in this World, your Passage through it would be comfortable, as well as safe; your Way would be pleasant, as well as your End. Peace.

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